

Message Text

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SUBJECT: HONG KONG REACTION TO CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S REPORT ON
NARCOTICS

SUMMARY: NEWS REPORTS ON THE RELEASE OF CONGRESSMAN LESTER WOLFF'S REPORT ON NARCOTICS IN SEASIA PROMPTED LOCAL NEWSPAPERS TO QUERY BOTH CONGEN AND HKG OFFICIALS. CONGEN SPOKESMAN QUOTED AS SAYING HKG HAD BEEN "VERY COOPERATIVE" WITH LOCAL BNDD AGENTS. COMMISSIONER OF NARCOTICS NORMAN ROLPH AND CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF NARCOTICS BUREAU JOHN RUMBELOW WERE QUOTED EXTENSIVELY BY THE HONG KONG STANDARD AND SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST (SCMP), RESPECTIVELY. REQUEST COPIES OF REPORT BE AIRPOUCHED TO CONGEN. END SUMMARY.

1. BOTH MAJOR ENGLISH-LANGUAGE HONG KONG NEWSPAPERS JULY 29 FRONT-PAGED REPORTS ON CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S NARCOTICS REPORT, STRESSING THEME OF LACK OF COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND HK OFFICIALS AS REASON FOR INEFFECTIVE ATTEMPTS TO STOP FLOW OF HEROIN INTO THE U.S.. THE STANDARD QUOTED ROLPH AS DESCRIBING THE REPORT AS "NONSENSE" AND CLAIMING THAT HE WAS COOPERATING WITH COLLEAGUES ALL UNCLASSIFIED

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THE WORLD, INCLUDING AMERICANS. REFERRING TO A MARCH MEETING BETWEEN US AND HKG OFFICIALS (PROBABLY A REFERENCE TO THE JUNE MEETING IN HONG KONG), ROLPH INDICATED THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD IN "CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE". HE ALSO DENIED ANY PRESSURE FROM THE AMERICAN CONSULATE.

2. ACCORDING TO SCMP, RUMBELOW CLAIMED HE WAS "SICK AND TIRED" OF PEOPLE COMING TO HONG KONG AND "SHOOTING OFF THEIR MOUTHS". "IF ANYONE CAN DETERMINE WITHIN A WEEK THAT THERE IS CONTRABAND EXPORT, I'D LIKE TO HAVE THEM ON MY STAFF". RUMBELOW IS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING THAT MEANS OF STOPPING SENATORS FROM "SHOOTING OFF THEIR MOUTHS BACK HOME" HAD BEEN "DISCUSSED INTERMINABLY" WITH BNDD OFFICIALS. RUMBELOW IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT LARGE AMOUNTS OF DRUGS ARE GOING FROM HONG KONG TO THE U.S., THAT HONG KONG IS AN OPEN PORT AND PERSONS COULD BE SMUGGLING PRIVATELY ALTHOUGH THERE IS DEFINITELY NO ORGANIZED CONTROL OR SYNDICATES BEHIND SUCH EXPORTS, AND THAT HONG KONG AUTHORITIES HAVE ARRESTED PERSONS FROM OKINAWA, AUSTRALIA, AND PHILIPPINES ATTEMPTING TO BUY HEROIN FOR SYNDICATES IN HONG KONG. RUMBELOW ADMITTED RECEIPT OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE ON THAI TRAWLERS BUT QUESTIONED WHY TRAWLERS WERE NOT STOPPED IN THAILAND. ACTING ON SUCH REPORTS, HE MOBILIZED HIS STAFF BUT THEY HAVE NOT EVEN SEEN A TRAWLER, INDICATING THAT THE INTELLIGENCE IS "BLATANTLY FABRICATED OR ELSE IT IS A QUESTION OF RELIABILITY". COMMENTING ON A POSSIBLE INCREASE IN BNDD STAFF IN HONG KONG, RUMBELOW IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT ENLARGING THE STAFF WOULD NOT DO SINCE "THE SYNDICATE WHICH CONTROLS THE STUFF DEFIES PENETRATION". RUMBELOW INDICATED THAT BNDD DOES NOT HAVE AN OPERATIONAL ROLE, DOES HAVE LOCAL SOURCES "BUT SOMETIMES THE INFORMATION THEY RECEIVE IS FABRICATED".

3. ON OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS, RUMBELOW IS QUOTED AS FOLLOWS: "THE AMERICANS WOULD LIKE AN OPERATIONAL ROLE IN HONG KONG BUT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO LET THEM BECAUSE THEY WOULD OBTAIN NO RESULTS - AT LEAST JUDGING BY THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS IN THAILAND OVER THE PAST THREE OR FOUR YEARS AS THE PROBLEM AFFECTS HONG KONG. THE AMERICANS WOULD HAVE NO JURISDICTION AND WOULD BE ACTING ILLEGALLY IN HONG KONG. YOU CAN'T HAVE PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONALITIES COMING IN AND ENFORCING OUR LAW. THIS IS A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT AND WOULD ACHIEVE VERY LITTLE."
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4. ON THE REPORT'S CLAIM THAT AT LEAST A DOZEN SECRET HEROIN REFINERIES OPERATE AROUND THE CLOCK, RUMBELOW CONSIDERED THIS "NAIVE". "THERE ARE AT LEAST 30 HEROIN FACTORIES IN HONG KONG" BUT THEY OPERATE ON A VERY LIMITED BASIS, MOSTLY BETWEEN MID-NIGHT AND 5 A.M.. WITH 368,000 FLATS IN HONG KONG, "WHERE DO YOU START LOOKING?"

5. CONGEN SPOKESMAN, WHEN QUERIED BY SCMP REPORTER, INDICATED
THAT THERE IS GOOD COOPERATION BETWEEN CONGEN AND HKG AUTHORITIES
ON NARCOTICS.
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